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Housekeepers' Chat

Monday, April 28, 1930

NOT FOR PUBLICATION.

Subject: "Inspection of the House and Its Equipment." Information from Division of Building and Housing, U. S. Department of Commerce; Menu and recipes from Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. D. A.

Bulletins available: "Simple Plumbing Repairs in the Home," "Floors and Floor Coverings," "Convenient Kitchens," "Farm Plumbing."

--ooOoo--

Better Homes Week is upon us. This very Monday, April 28, is the first day of Better Homes Week, and I feel that we should do something about it.

Shall we begin with the inspection of the house, and its equipment? Then, when we have inspected the house, noted all the necessary repairs, and improvements to be made this spring, we can write our menu for the day. By the way, we're having Rhubarb Pie for dessert.

But now we are going to inspect our house, outside and in, and see what needs to be done to it this spring. It is neither safe nor wise to wait until something breaks, or gives way completely, before making repairs.

We shall conduct our inspection in a systematic manner, by beginning in the basement. Let's examine the foundation walls, and the floor. Are there cracks in the walls or floor. Any evidence of leakage? While we are in the basement, we might as well examine the wooden sills on top of the walls, note whether they are sound, and whether cracks between wall and sills are caulked, to keep out moisture and cold air. If the basement is not ceiled, we had better examine the joists, for signs of sagging or warping. Posts, sills, joists, and other woodwork come in for their share of attention, along with water pipes and the floor drains.

Next, after the foundation walls and basement, comes the heating equipment. If grates are warped or broken, or if walls of the firebox are cracked, we will have repairs made, or new parts ordered immediately. Let's not forget to examine the boiler, for possible cracks or leaks. The coils or baffles in a hot water boiler above the fire-box require frequent brushing, to remove soot. Does the asbestos coating on the boiler need patching? Do any of the heating pipes require covering? Is the chimney in good condition? Is the cement sound around the smoke duct, where it enters the chimney? Does the woodwork adjoining the chimney need covering, to lessen

the danger of fire? All these things we will note, in our inspection of the heating equipment.

Next, we will conduct an inspection tour of the outside walls of the house; that being done, we will examine the outside of the windows. That being done, we will inspect the roof, the flashing, the gutters. Which reminds me that I must tell Uncle Ebenezer to go up to the attic and find out where our roof leaks. If there's anything more discouraging than a leaky roof, I don't know what it is. That is, unless it's a plaster ceiling which falls while you have summer guests. Did your dining room ceiling ever fall while you had visitors? I hope it never does -- unless you have visitors you want to discourage from coming to see you.

As soon as we have inspected the outside walls of the house, the exterior of the windows, the roof, the flashing, and the gutters, we can come inside the house, and see what improvements should be made this spring. Defects inside the house are generally more apparent than outside defects. A clogged drain, a leaky faucet, a window or a door which sticks, will attract the attention of some member of the household. Which reminds me again, I must tell Uncle Ebenezer about the kitchen faucet.

While we are inside the house, let's examine all doors, to see whether they hang true, and whether they squeak. Let's raise and lower all the windows, to find out whether they slide, and whether or not the cords are broken, or are of unequal length. See if the sashes fit, and if weather-stripping is needed around the windows and doors. Are the screens tight enough to keep out all insects?

Look for cracks in the plaster, particularly over door openings, and note whether there is danger of plaster falling, in case the ceiling is cracked.

After we have inspected the structure of the house, it might be well to examine some of our household equipment. We may ward off trouble by inspecting the cords on all electrical appliances, to see whether they should be renewed. Are all exposed wires well insulated? Would the installation of additional outlets improve the lighting? Be sure there are extra fuses for the fuse box, in case one is needed.

If gas is used for cooking, the burners on the gas stove may need cleaning, or the air vents may require adjusting. If gas is used for lighting, examine the gas tips. Do they need cleaning? Are the mantles sound?

We could go on, for some time, inspecting the household equipment in our houses, but if we did that, there'd be no time for our menu, and the Rhubarb Pie.

However, before we write recipes, there's one fact I might mention. If you want help in making your home a "better home," I can name two or three publications which you might want. For instance, there's "Simple Plumbing Repairs in the Home," "Floors and Floor Coverings," "Convenient Kitchens," and "Farm Plumbing."

Would you like any or all of these for your kitchen library?

And speaking of kitchens, here we are, ready to cook our dinner. Or we will be, as soon as we write the menu: Baked Eggs and Cheese; Scalloped Tomatoes; Buttered Turnips; and Rhubarb Pie.

First, the directions for Baked Eggs and Cheese:

Break the desired number of eggs in a shallow, greased baking dish. Add a few tablespoons of cream and salt enough to season. Sprinkle with a mixture of grated cheese and fine dry bread crumbs. Set this dish in a pan containing hot water. Bake in a moderate oven until the eggs are set and crumbs are brown. Just before serving, add a few dashes of paprika.

Shall I repeat the directions, for Baked Eggs and Cheese? (Repeat directions.)

Now let's write the recipe for Fresh Rhubarb Pie. Six ingredients, for Fresh Rhubarb Pie:

3 cups raw sliced rhubarb	1 tablespoon water
1 cup sugar	2-1/2 tablespoons flour, and
1/2 teaspoon salt	3 slices orange.

Please check the ingredients, while I repeat them: (Repeat).

Line a pie pan with pastry dough, and bake in a hot oven, until delicately browned. Meanwhile cook the rhubarb, sugar, salt, and water together until the rhubarb is tender. Remove 3 or 4 tablespoons of the juice and when it is cool, mix with the flour. Cut the orange into small sections, and add to the rhubarb. Pour into the baked crust, moisten the rim, lay the top crust in place, and tuck in the edges carefully so that the juice will not leak out. Bake the pie in a hot oven (about 450 degrees F.) for 20 minutes.

The menu, again: Baked Eggs and Cheese; Scalloped Tomatoes; Buttered Turnips; and Rhubarb Pie.

Tomorrow: "Pictures In The Home."

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